



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

BLOOMINGTON MAN SENTENCED TO 51 MONTHS IN PRISON FOR POSSESSING CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

PEORIA, Ill. — A 26-year-old Bloomington, Ill., man was sentenced Friday to more than four years in prison for possessing child pornography on his computer, following an investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

U.S. District Judge Michael M. Mihm sentenced Michael Priller, of the 1100 block of Eckstram in Bloomington, to 51 months in federal prison on one count of possessing child pornography. Judge Mihm further ordered that Priller remain under supervision for the remainder of his life after he's released from prison. He was ordered to surrender to the federal Bureau of Prisons on Jan. 3. Priller pleaded guilty to the charge in July.

Priller is the latest individual to be caught up in a global ICE child pornography investigation that has targeted an Internet billing company based in Minsk, Belarus, and its affiliated entities in the United States. To date, the probe has resulted in the arrest of more than 1,200 people worldwide. In January 2004, the Belarus firm was charged with money laundering as well as providing credit card billing services for 50 child pornography websites worldwide and operating child porn websites on its own. Three officers of the company were arrested in Europe and have been extradited to the United States. All three of those officers have pleaded guilty in Newark, N.J., as have four officers of two affiliated companies in Florida and California.

Having dismantled the leadership of the enterprise, ICE special agents in domestic ICE offices and 52 Attaché offices worldwide turned their focus to those who purchased child porn subscriptions from these sites in the United States and abroad. A lead arising out of that investigation led to a search of Priller's home in October 2004. At the residence, ICE agents found numerous pornographic images of children on his home computer.

This global Internet child pornography investigation is part of ICE's Operation Predator, a nationwide initiative to safeguard children against Internet child pornographers, criminal alien sex offenders, child sex tourists, and human traffickers. Since it was launched in July 2003, ICE special agents have arrested more than 6,800 individuals nationwide, including more than 340 in Illinois.

“Those who sexually exploit children should no longer expect distance or the anonymity of cyberspace to protect them,” said Greg Archambeault, resident agent-in-charge of ICE investigations in Springfield, Ill. “ICE is using all of its law enforcement authorities to combat this horrific behavior both here and abroad.”

Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas A. Keith successfully prosecuted this case. The FBI assisted in the investigation.

ICE encourages the reporting of suspected child predators and any suspicious activity through its toll-free hotline at 1-866-DHS-2ICE. This hotline is staffed around the clock by investigators. Suspected child sexual exploitation or missing children may be reported to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, an Operation Predator partner, at 1-800-843-5678 or <http://www.cybertipline.com>.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.